



## Creating a specialist's dream

By Joseph Allbeury

Specialist orthodontist Geoffrey Wexler didn't even know he wanted a brand new practice until he was out and about in Toorak with his wife, Cassandra, just before Christmas in 2010.

"We were out shopping for Christmas presents one evening and ended up spending a lot more than we expected," Dr Wexler said. "We happened to see a vacant shopfront in one of the relatively new developments in the area and thought, wouldn't that be a perfect place for our practice?"

Dr Wexler has practised orthodontics for 22 years and at that point in time, he was working on the fourth level of an office building, 200 metres away from what would soon be the location of his new practice.

"I'd bought the practice I was working at from another orthodontist several years ago and it had been built around the way they liked to work," he said. "We all work differently and so there were many aspects, given the chance, I would have liked to change. It also only had two chairs, which in orthodontics, really constrains how efficiently you can operate."

"Having said that, I hadn't really thought about moving until right at that moment when we saw the new space. Our lease was coming up for renewal however, so everything just seemed to fall into place."

Dr Wexler said that the only drawback to the 215 square metre space was that he would have liked it to be 15-20% larger, but the opportunity to relocate proved too good to miss.





The space itself moves from street level on one side through to the atrium area of a shopping centre on the other, providing excellent access and exposure. The complex includes a mix of shops, offices and residential in the heart of Toorak. It is next to Woolworths and a large council car park and caters to patients from across Melbourne for a variety of “niche” orthodontic treatments including lingual brackets and SureSmile (a system that utilises robotically formed archwires to precisely move teeth).

After securing the premises, as a solo practitioner, Dr Wexler was then free to design the practice to the way he likes to work and as part of that, massively increase the facilities to enhance patient service and treatment efficiency.

“My practice is quite specialised within the orthodontic specialty and we attract adult patients from across Melbourne and the state for linguals, SureSmile and other niche treatments,”

Dr Wexler said. “Because of that, I wanted a really premium quality fit-out for the premises and I immediately thought of Levitch Design Associates [LDA] as I’d seen many of their practices featured in *Australasian Dental Practice*.”

Dr Wexler contacted LDA and two other companies with extensive dental practice design experience to consult on the project.

“It was very important to me to ensure that I got the most out of the space and that the design reflected the result I was after,” Dr Wexler said. “At one point, I was dealing with three different design companies and working through dozens of concepts and sketch plans in order to achieve what I wanted. This was time consuming and no doubt frustrating for everyone involved.

“As part of the process to select a designer to work with, we also visited projects all three companies had completed and we consistently liked Levitch’s work.





“Another area where LDA stood out was that they knew the boundaries of good dental design. As an example, they knew the right number of chairs to include in the space and didn’t just accommodate more to please us when it would have been detrimental to the overall design.

“These factors, combined with their overall concept, made them our final choice to design and construct the project.”

Dr Wexler said that he then spent an inordinate amount of time with the team at LDA to ensure every detail was perfect.

“I had definite requirements in the clinical areas of the practice,” Dr Wexler said. “I knew precisely what I was after and where all the equipment and cabinetry needed to be placed down to the millimetre in order to ensure maximum efficiency and ergonomics.

“There are three different treatment areas in all. We have open plan space with three chairs and a lot of family seating for treating younger patients; two private treatment rooms for adults that are separated by the sterilisation area; and a third private area set up for new patient examinations and photography.”

Dr Wexler purchased all new equipment for the practice from Gunz Dental including six Belmont dental chairs.

“We bought five Belmont Clesta II dental chairs for the open plan area and the private rooms and a Belmont Clair Clesta II ‘knee break’ chair for the new patient area, plus ceiling mounted lights,” he said. “We then chose Beaverstate equipment, also from Gunz, for the delivery systems which are concealed in the cabinetry and slide out when required.



“I was a paediatric dentist before I was an orthodontist and I’ve never liked over-the-chair delivery systems as it is very intrusive on the patient’s space. So the idea was to conceal all the equipment as much as possible and eliminate clutter.”

Dr Wexler said that the increase from two to six chairs has made the work environment far less stressful.

“Stress often comes from keeping people waiting so I now work with two oral health therapists which has increased our clinical capacity and we have more chairs to use which allows us to meet our promise of keeping to schedule. This arrangement also maximises the use of the orthodontist’s most valuable asset - time.”





Once the clinical areas were locked in, the rest of the practice unfolded around it with spaces created for the administrative aspects of the practice, reception and waiting areas, consulting rooms, offices and facilities for staff and patients.

"We signed a fixed price contract with LDA and it represented excellent value," he said. "I worked with Jeremy Edghill and later Antony Poate who were both incredibly accommodating and managed to perfect the design of the ideas I wanted to include. Everything was considered in great detail and is now ideally placed to maximise efficiency. The time that you put into the design phase really pays off when you gain the benefits of working in an ideal environment every single day."



## Summary

### The Practice

Principal	Geoffrey Wexler
Type of Practice	Specialist orthodontic
Location	Toorak, Melbourne, Victoria
Size	215 square metres
No of chairs	6

### The Team

Design	Levitch Design Associates
Senior Designer	Antony Poate
Interior Design	Jeremy Edghill
Construction Manager	Liam O'Shea
Installer	Dentequip

### Equipment

Dental Units	Belmont Clair Clesta II and Belmont Clesta II chairs Beaverstate customised built-in delivery systems
Suction	Cattani Turbo Smart A
Compressor	Cattani K200
Software	Dolphin, SureSmile

"We received extremely good value for money from working with LDA and the result is excellent. Throughout the project, LDA was very supportive of the need to get the design right for an orthodontic practice and I am appreciative of their patience. We couldn't have gotten the same result without them."

"My wife, Cassandra, had wanted to oversee all the material choices for the practice and she worked closely with LDA to achieve an outstanding result. The large, complex array of fabrics and finishes that she worked with Anne Levitch to come up with is nothing short of impressive and well beyond the scope of anything I could have conceived. Everyone who comes here thinks it's fantastic and the brief to include layers of contemporary, earthy colours interwoven with a variety of different textures has been achieved to the letter."

"Cassandra and I also worked in unison to choose all the pieces of furniture throughout the practice and that was another way we were able to add some personal touches to the project."

Dr Wexler said that as part of the fixed price contract, LDA nominated the builder for the project and that he developed a very good rapport with him. "LDA provided very detailed plans and a schedule of materials and finishes and it essentially all went to plan from there. It was a very complicated build but the builder did an excellent job and the result is fantastic."

"The entire project has been a learning experience for me and I am thankful to everyone involved for working with us to achieve the amazing end result. In fact, the first day we moved in was the best day I have ever practised in my life."

